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1853

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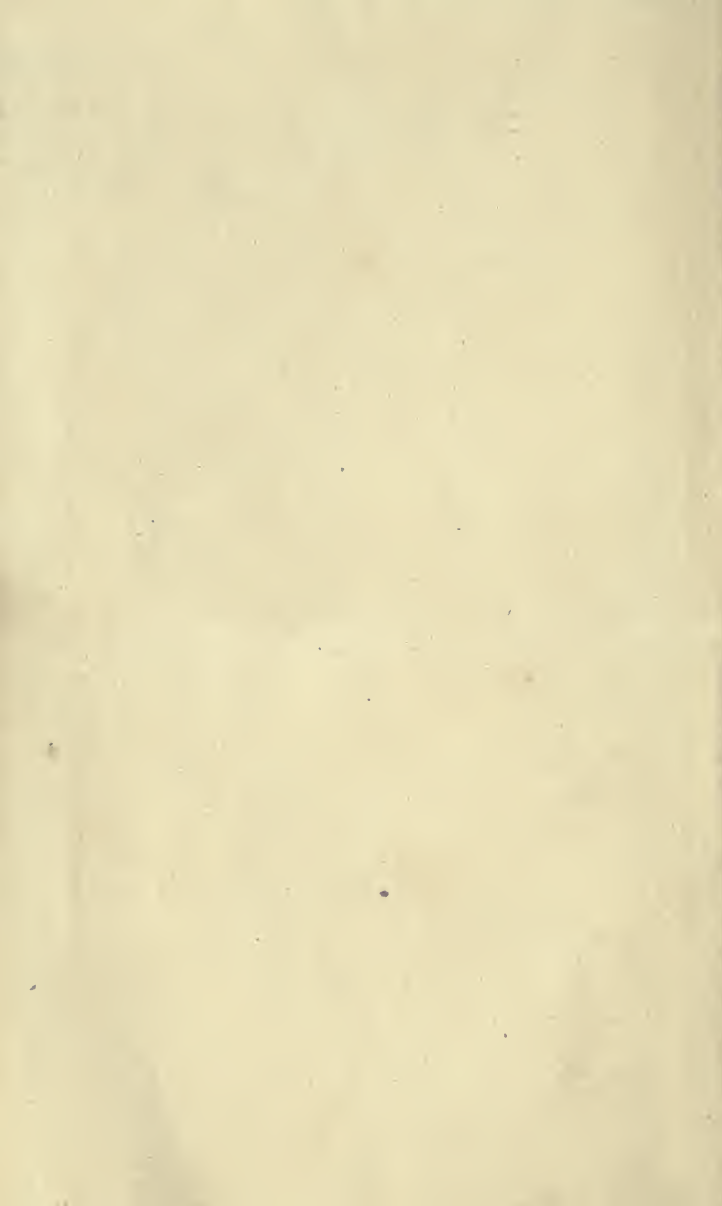
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P O E M S .

BY

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LOAN STACK

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H O M E .

THE love of Home is deep as that of life ;
No faint emotion, but a feeling rife
With wondrous power to strengthen or control
Each secret impulse of the human soul .
To each and all the very Name brings back
Some glimpse of joy to brighten Memory's track ;
While Fancy, weary and averse to roam,
Lingers with gladness round our childhood's Home.
Years may have brought sad changes ; one by one
Those we loved deeply may have left us—gone

Home to the blessed land, or if on earth,
Far from the once-loved country of their birth;
Yet still in thought we wander as of yore,
Through the old woods, and tread the oft-trod shore;
We hear the very sounds which pleased us then,
Familiar voices call to us again,
Familiar faces lighted up with joy
Give to the man the rapture of the boy,—
The Father's look, the Mother's fond caress,
The Sister's glowing warmth of tenderness,
The tears, the smiles, the healthy tone of mirth
Which shed a lustre round the social hearth,—
All these return, like stars o'er life's dark sea,
To illumine the o'ershadowing heaven of memory.

BUT sorrow too may find a place within—
Regrets, remorse at long-forgotten sin,—

Grief at the callous heart which kept aloof
 From words of love, when uttered in reproof
 By lips now hushed; how vainly do we crave
 Forgiveness, from the silence of the grave!
 Perchance, to while away the passing hour,
 And hardly conscious of Love's wayward power,
 We trifled with affection, till there came
 A sting of anguish at the mentioned name.
 The sport of moments brings a grief of years,
 And thoughtless words are not effaced by tears.

HOME is not habitation; it is not
 The outward lodgment in a certain spot;
 It is not bought with money—is not sold
 As houses, horses, daughters are, for gold.
 No!—let an Indian Nabob, forced for health
 To rest and be contented with his wealth,

Fill a large mansion with his fruitful spoil,
 And be an idle lord on English soil;
 Let him have hounds and hunters, let him be
 The proudest and the freest of the free,—
 What lacks he yet? His heart is cold as stone;
 He has no joys, no sorrows but his own;
 He never smiles but at his boundless gain,
 Nor drops a tear save when himself in pain.
 Home is not Home despite its mirth and cheer,
 Home is not Home when selfishness is there.

HOME is the haven for a troubled breast,
 The oasis in life's desert; there we rest
 As in a land of plenty, and the light
 Of loving eyes dispels the clouds of night;
 E'en pain itself is softened by the care
 That woman's gentleness awards us there:—

The long night-watches, and the weary days
 Of self-forgetfulness, bespeak her praise ;
 Each look she catches, and each sigh she hears,
 She shows her gladness, but conceals her fears ;
 Speaks words of comfort while her eyes are dim,
 Chaunts in the saddest hour a thankful hymn,
 And fills the chamber with a joy unknown
 To Pleasure's sons, who deem all joy their own.

AH ! weep for those—the homeless, the forlorn,
 Who hear no human voice except in scorn,
 Whose hearts are withered like the autumn leaf,
 Too crush'd for penitence, too sear'd for grief,—
 Who live without one joy that life should give,
 And pass unheeded when they cease to live.
 Weep for the houseless children of despair,
 For whom God only has not ceased to care :

And weep for HER, the erring one who fell,
 And then forsaken, found on earth a hell.
 Oh Father! who didst spurn her from thy roof
 With mailed breast, 'gainst which all tears were proof.
 Oh Sister! who didst deem a sister's shame
 A burning brand upon thine own fair fame.
 Oh Brother!—virtuous, as virtue goes,—
 Who never sinned except beneath the rose,
 But who, if Christ had put thee to the test,
 Would soon have slunk away like all the rest.
 Oh! Father, Sister, Brother—so discreet
 In conduct, and in virtue so complete,
 So pure, so perpendicularly good,—
 Let no unwelcome thought of *her* intrude!
 Her heart is slowly breaking day by day,
 But you will never witness the decay.
 Though tenderly and delicately bred,
 Now on the cold damp straw she rests her head;

But what of that?—the world will take your side,
 And loudly praise you for your honest pride;
 Yet God shall judge, and now perchance, in heaven
 Your sins are chronicled, but hers forgiven.

OH ENGLAND! oh my country! thou art blest
 Above the nations; on thy peaceful breast
 How many thousand happy homesteads stand,
 The truest bulwarks of my native land!
 Thy hills are clothed with verdure,—valleys, green
 With rich luxuriance, at their base are seen.
 'Tis not amid the city's garish strife,
 But in the genial charms of rural life,
 That one escaped from foreign shores may find
 The true expression of the English mind

SURVEY our isle, its men of might who stand
 Half-way 'twixt heaven and earth, a noble band :
 Patriots and poets, statesmen,—martyrs too,
 God's truest heroes, and earth's chosen few,—
 And say, if 'twas not first in life's young hour
 Their minds were braced as with a secret power.
 Did not a mother's love give courage then ?
 Did not the boys foretell the future men ?
 Yes ! by the cheerful hearth, the parent's knee,
 Their souls were nourished for eternity.
 Great men have had great mothers ; women filled
 With the heart's best life-blood, strong, but not self-
 willed ;
 Heroic souls ! innately braver far
 Than stern philosophers or stoics are ;
 Calm 'mid life's ills, yet not with joy elate,
 Eager to act, and yet resigned to wait.
 Oh Cowper ! though she died when thou wast young,
 A Mother's love to thy fond memory clung ;

The one firm link which bound thee to the past,
 The rainbow-arch across thy storm-cloud east.
 And thou, in words of winning tenderness,
 Hast sweetly told a Mother's power to bless,
 Hast called forth tears from eyes not apt to weep,
 And struck long-silent chords with the full sweep
 Of skilful hands. Oh household poet! thy song
 Shall live while men have hearts and love is strong!

WHEN faint and wearied with a weight of grief,
 We turn to Home for solace and relief,
 One loving word will raise the spirit's tone,
 Our fears are stilled, we do not feel alone.
 If woes are shared, joy mingles with our pain,
 And bliss diffused confers a double gain.
 It marks nobility, when thoughts which thrill
 Throughout our being, mould another's will;

When Wit or Humour playing from our brain,
 Or Poetry's subdued but sweeter strain,
 Stirs up emotions in the general mind,
 As trees are stirred by the resistless wind;
 But, oh! it speaks a nobler power by far,
 To touch the seat where our affections are—
 To calm the heart, to find a lodgment where
 Of old sat Doubt, or Sorrow, or Despair,
 Till the enfranchised spirit breathes once more
 As spirits breathe upon a holier shore.

SUCH was HER province, who with gentle care,
 Infused a genial feeling everywhere.
 She moved as in an atmosphere of light,
 And ruled by love, as every woman might.
 By nature calm, and inwardly at rest,
 In blessing others she herself was blest;

And when she spoke, the saddest heart would rise
Refreshed, as by some gale from Paradise.

But, ah! 'the good die first!'—and so SHE died,
Ere life's fresh spring had changed to summer tide.

THE room is darkened; not a sound is heard
Save the clear, cheerful chirping of the bird,
Which sings without the window; or the bell
Which sounds a mournful peal, a last farewell.
And SHE is there, or *was*; her spirit's home
Lies far beyond this world of sin and gloom.
I heard the whispers of the parting breath,
And wiped her brow, and closed her eyes in death.

OH! she was beautiful in health's bright time,
Full of the radiance of her golden prime;

With earnest, downcast glances, part revealing
 The thoughts which lay within, and part concealing.
 As some deep stream, reflecting in its course
 The limpid clearness of its primal source,
 So her chaste spirit, formed in God's own light,
 Pure as a southern sky, and not less bright,
 A tender, loving ministrant was given
 To raise our souls from earth, and lift to Heaven.

FROM week to week she faded : day by day
 We watched her spirits droop, her strength decay ;
 It was but meet that one so good and fair
 Should pant for purer light—celestial air.
 And yet we dared to hope : the hectic hue
 Which tinged her cheeks, made ours brighten too.
 We thought of Death, but deemed the Reaper's hand
 Removed the weeds, and let the flow'rets stand.

And she the fairest! could he touch a form
 Buoyant with life—with hope's full pulses warm?
 Vainly we dreamed, and bitter was our pain,
 Our fears but vanished to return again.

COME near, come silently; ere yet the grave
 Closes o'er one we fondly hoped to save.
 How changed, and yet how lovely!—on her brow,
 No trace of pain or grief is lingering now.
 How calm the features are!—no Grecian art,
 No painter's skill, could such repose impart;
 But the glad spirit cast on them a ray
 Of its own glory, as it left the clay.

COME near, come silently; the room will tell
 The simple tastes of her we loved so well:

The 'Poet's Corner'—so 'twas fondly styled,—
 The harp which many an idle hour beguiled;
 The ancient tales of legendary lore,
 O'er which in summer hours she loved to pore;
 And all those thousand nameless charms which skill,
 Blended with fancy, fashions at its will.
 And proofs of fond affection too are there,
 With tender tokens of a mother's care;—
One above all the rest she learned to prize,
 That wondrous Book which led her to the skies,
 And which, as life's last hours were hastening by,
 She clasped within her hands in ecstasy;
 Then with a smile, to chase away our gloom,
 She softly whispered, 'I am going Home.'

YES! there is still another Home in store,
 The children's gathering-place when time is o'er,

Within the Father's mansions—where the light
Of endless day beams from the Infinite;
And in the bliss of families below
God shadows forth what He will *there* bestow.
Faint, and in outline dim, the type appears,
Obscured by sin, and blotted o'er with tears;
But He wipes all away, whose love hath given
Rest to the spirit here—eternal rest in Heaven.

THE SKYLARK.

DRIPPING dew-drops from its wings,

Merrily the skylark soareth ;

Ever rising as it sings,

From its tuneful throat it poureth

Notes which thrill the silent air,—

Sounds which vibrate everywhere.

Though it leave its earthly nest,

Still it flies on wings of love

Upwards, quivering as in quest

Of a joyous home above ;

Till from sight the fleecy cloud

Hides the warbler as a shroud.

All its soul in sunlight steeping,
 Far above it wings its flight,
 Through the unruffled azure sweeping,
 Bathed in beauty as in light,—
 Higher, higher, higher still,
 Singing ‘at its own sweet will.’

Lovers seated in the shade
 Hear its song above, and bless it;
 How the loving, tender maid
 Longs to feed and to caress it,—
 Listening with half-tearful eyes
 To *this* Bird of Paradise!

Listening till her heart, o’erflowing,
 Melts at melody so true;
 And the summer breezes blowing,
 Fall upon her breast like dew;—
 In that breast if grief have share,
 Love itself is slumbering there.

Joyous thoughts must be thy dower,

Happy, happy bird of light!

Not the nightingale, in bower

Scented with the flowers of night,

Singeth such a heav'nly lay—

Thou art soul, and he but clay.

Thou art spirit, well I know it,

For that tender frame of thine

Soon would droop and waste and show it,

If the soul were not divine,—

Resting on the cloudless blue,

Singing melodies so true.

A HARVEST SONG.

COME, leave the mill, throw down the flail,

And taste our country cheer ;

The Autumn's yellow sheaves are stored,

And plenty presses on our board,

We 've had a glorious year !—

Away with grief, away with care !

For one glad hour at least we 'll share

Life's joyous cup together ;

Love shall look on with radiant face,

And friendship join in fond embrace,

Like flowers amid the heather.

A song, a song for Harvest-Home—

Strike up my boys and maids!

We'll make our woodland arches ring,

Like ancient minstrels aye we'll sing

Within the forest glades;—

But first a thankful hymn of praise,

With hearts and voices too, we'll raise

To all-benignant Heaven—

To Him who crowns the year with good,

Who giveth e'en the ravens food,

To Him all praise be given!

The mountain's base is hid in mist,

There's sunlight up above;

And all the clouds which gird us round,

Shall aye like mountain mists be found,

Or shadows in a grove;

Without the shade, without the sun,—
 In vain you strive to keep the one,
 And part with its twin-brother!
 Thank God for both—for joys and woes—
 He knows our griefs, our bliss He knows,
 And blends one with the other.

And if pain come some future day,
 And come it must and will,
 That 's not a cause for present grief—
 A vain foreboding 's no relief—
 Let us be happy still!
 Come, boy! and broach the cask of ale,
 'Tis large, but trust me, we 'll not fail
 To send it empty back;—
 Don't laugh my man, if you and I
 And twenty stout hearts like us try,
 We 'll do it in a crack!

And now a dance upon the green,

The old ones can sit by;—

No nonsense! come my lads and mate,

What! partners for all girls but Kate!—

Well then I'll even try;

Strike up the fiddle and away!

Strike up—I'm growing young to-day!

The old wife laughs—well, let her!

I doubt if twenty years ago,

When first we married,—more's the woe,—

I could have tripped it better.

But see the shades of evening fall,

The nights are damp and cold;

Away then where the faggots burn,

And each and all of us by turn

Shall tell a tale of old,

Of knights who joust beneath the trees,

Or fairies floating on the breeze ;

Or else a quaint love-ditty.

And wife, you must not scold or frown,

I'm thinking of a bran new gown

For my young partner, Kitty.

TO A LADY.

FAREWELL! along life's gloomy way

For ever now we move apart;

But memories of the past will stay

And linger round the saddest heart.

How swiftly flew the happy hours

When looks spoke more than words can tell!

But all the bliss that once was ours,

Has ended in that word, Farewell!

Left helpless on the world again,

Alone to struggle and to bear,

I lose the echo of that strain

Which thrilled with hope, and quenched despair.

Dependent on the light within,
Without one ray of thine to cheer;
The joys which ushered Autumn in,
Have faded with the fading year.

Yet, still shall Fancy's eye review
The pleasant scenes where once we met,
The woodland-walks where wild flowers grew,
The myrtles at thy casement set,
The old, old bridge, by which the stream
Circles the jutting rocks in foam,
The hills on which the sunsets gleam—
The quiet hills which guard thy home,—

The gloomy shade, the rustic plank
Which first I saw thee passing over,
When starting at my horse's clank,
Thine eyes were raised, and won a lover.

Oh! then, upon my homeward path,
The woods, the streams, had all a tone;
And thro' the glen and o'er the rath,
I heard thy praise, and thine alone.

'Tis Winter now, and drear and cold,
While through the woods the winds are sighing;
The pools are frozen on the wold,
And round the hills the mists are lying.
The desolation jarreth not
With my soul's grief, but suiteth well;—
I read in it my future lot—
May thine be brighter! oh, Farewell!

LOVE'S MEMORIES.

Down by the woods, where the blooming purple
heather

Sheds its sweet perfume in the pleasant morning
prime,

In the quiet mountain shade we wandered forth
together,

Gladdening our young hearts with many an ancient
rhyme.

Chaunting some old ballad, some wild and artless
measure ;

Or reading about Rosalind among the forest boughs ;

In the golden age of courting, when the minutes,
 winged with pleasure,
Flew lightly at the whispering of lovers' fervent
 vows.

And sometimes on the page such a glorious light
 would glisten,
Such a flash from out the ether of a bright and
 purer sphere,—
That we closed the book with wonder, and sat us
 down to listen,
For we heard the angel voices which were singing
 to us near.

Glimpses of a golden future, tender memories of the
 past,
Hopes of deep and solemn import from their spirit-
 home above,

Slightly hidden from our seeing by the glory round
 them cast,
Come like mirrored shapes before us, when the
 soul is filled with love.

And the light which Love had kindled had shed its
 halo round us,
As we gazed upon the woodland with its old
 majestic trees ;
In the depth of nature's stillness, how its silken
 fettters bound us !
And the secrets of the future were all whispered
 in the breeze.

Not the noblest strain of music pealing through the
 solemn aisles,
Till the old cathedral towers seem to vibrate with
 the swell,

Fills the spirit with such rapture, or the fancy so
beguiles,

As the music of Love's making on the chords it
strikes so well.

Years have fled—for youth is fleeting,—Love is like
a stranger guest,

Yet the bliss it left in passing dwells for ever in
our souls;

Fools may sneer, and wits deride it, pointing with a
courtly jest—

But the passion of the morning, manhood's calmer
noon controls.

TO A CHILD.

LIGHTSOME Mary, laughing Mary,
Tripping featly as a fairy,
Brightly smiles the world upon thee,
Gently fall its sorrows on thee,
Trust and Joy and Peace are thine,
Rays from heaven on thee must shine,
Glimpses, such as we may gain not,
Thoughts, which wiser heads attain not—
Child in simple beauty free,
God's pure image shines in thee.

Eyes that long have dealt with weeping,
Look with joy upon thee sleeping,
For thy fair young cheek then gloweth
Like a rose when first it bloweth,
Bright as dew - drops, which the morn
Hangeth on the scented thorn,—
Doth some vision pass before thee?
Is some Angel bending o'er thee?—
Whatsoe'er thy dreams may be,
God's pure image shines in thee.

TO THE NIGHTINGALE.

SCORNER of light and sun! why closest thou

Thy throat when all the feathered tribes are
gladdest?

Dost thou to some loved fair one breathe a vow,

Which only heard at night makes day the saddest?

Or fearest thou thy song would ill be heard

Amidst the noise of earth, 'immortal bird?'

Thou art not sad, thou art not melancholy,

Like pining lover on the distant seas;

But all the joys of youth and love are on thee,

And all the pleasures of 'full throated ease.'

Alone thou art not, for the woods rejoice

And thrill with sympathy at thy sweet voice.

The old tree's leaves awake, the young tree quivers,
 The night flowers smell more sweetly at thy lay;
 The weeping willow by the silent rivers,
 Unused to mirth, seems for a moment gay;
 The soft wind whisp'ring through the leafy grove
 Is hushed, attentive to thy voice of love.

And yon sweet maiden! from the casement bending—
 Her bed unpressed—gladdens at thy clear strain,
 Till as she listens, tears and smiles are blending,
 Her bosom heaves with rapture and with pain;
 Unheedful of the night dews, still she gazes
 On *one* loved star, and thanks thee for thy praises.

For thou dost praise her, loving all things lovely,
 Thy full heart bursts into impassioned song,
 Which unexhausted, ever soundeth heavenly,—
 Visions of beauty make thy spirit strong—
 Thou hast not heard of sorrow, pain, or care,
 Love teacheth thee, and Love makes all things fair.

Oh! for one moment of thy spirit's rapture,
The free uprising of thy joyous heart,
That burning words might fall by which to capture
That gentle maiden with resistless art—
For such a voice as thine to woo and win!
For such a voice to welcome moonlight in!

Sing once again, the night is clear and still,
And lover-like I tremble at thy voice;
Sing once again, till all my pulses thrill,
And in thy joy I also may rejoice;
Sing, and the echo of thy lightsome lay
Shall linger with me still when far away.

TIME'S CHANGES.

How cold and grey life seems ! I tread
The old frequented beaten way ;
But voices once beloved have fled ;
Their music lingers not to-day.

Far off I hear the shepherd's song,
And overhead the blackbird sings ;
The stream leaps joyfully along ;
The half-fledged sparrows try their wings.

The Spring's first green is on the trees,
The ancient trees I loved of yore ;
The violet still perfumes the breeze—
All seems the same as heretofore.

But *they*, the friends of youth are gone;
And *she*, the loved one, far away—
How cold and grey life seems! Forlorn
I tread the old and beaten way.

A YOUNG MAN'S FANCY.

SHE looks sae witchingly and arch,

Her face is sae beguiling,

'Tis like the ray o' early day.

Across the meadows smiling.

A king may boast a brighter toast,

In jewelled light arrayed;

Gie me to sip frae yonder lip,

I ask nae lovelier maid.

Nae sangs sound half sae weel as hers,

Nae voice sae saft and sweet;

Like some forgotten melody,

It sometimes gars me greet.

Her modest blush is like the flush

O' sunset o'er the sea;

Nae star sae bright can match the light

That sparkles in her ee.

An' mair than a' her heart's my ain,

Her heart sae fond an' true;

Warm, as the breath o' early love,

Pure, as the morning dew.

I wad na change, gie me to range

Through court or lordly ha',

Though beauties there may flourish fair,

Her smile is worth them a'.

PRELIMINARIES.

Dost thou love an infant's smile?
Art thou smitten with the wile
Of its simple beauty?—say,
Does the leafiness of May,
Do the wild flowers which spring,
And the sweet birds carolling,
Cause thy spirit to rejoice?
Dost thou listen to the voice
Of the lonely mountain streams,
Till it comes again in dreams,
With a music all its own,
And a quiet undertone?

Do thy happy footsteps pass
 Lightly o'er the dewy grass?—
 Ere the sun is up to greet thee,
 Or the villagers to meet thee,
 While the timid startled hare
 Passes by thee unaware,
 And the larks with quiv'ring wing
 Soar above the cloud and sing.
 Say dost thou too raise a psalm
 Grateful in the holy calm?
 Does thy heart in prayer aspire?
 Is it tuned like David's lyre
 To the praise of God? Oh thou
 Loved One tell me quickly now.
 Stay! while yet I ask again,
 Dost thou look beyond the ken
 Of a common mortal's sight,
 Onwards to the Infinite?

Dost thou walk above the round
Of trivial cares?—until the sound
Of the busy world is heard
Faintly as a whispered word,
And the songs and harps of heaven
Greet thine ears from morn till even.
What are books to thy delight?
Dost thou bow beneath the might
Of a poet's utterance?—
Till his melody enhance
Hidden things and outward show;
And thy thoughts divinely grow,
Quickened by his livelier teaching,
'Bove the clouds of earth o'erreaching,
Strong to climb and free to soar
Upward, upward evermore.
Wilt thou live a noble life?
Wilt thou be a perfect wife?

Yea, thou wilt, I ask no more,
All these things I trust thee for ;
Thus to question is to doubt,
Man's nature is but cold throughout ;
Woman's, warmer far doth prove,
Seeking only love for love.

TO THE SUMMER BREEZE.

O SUMMER BREEZE!

I love to listen to thy prayerful tone,
Which stirs the trees

To a like worship; not the solemn moan
Of the pine woodlands, nor the awful sound
Of the wild tempest, sweeping to the ground
The forest patriarchs; but a faint, low swell
Æolian-like, is thine; a gentle sigh,
Peaceful as that wherewith a babe might die.

O Summer Breeze ! I would but may not tell,
 All the bright thoughts which thou hast summoned back,
 With shadows too, that darken memory's track ;
 But joy hath most endurance : grief 's at best
 A stern intruder, an unwelcome guest ;
 It hath no tendrils strong enough to bind,
 It hath no lodgement in a tranquil mind :
 Aroint thee, gloomy spirit ! hence ! away !
 I'll welcome only happy thoughts to-day.

O Summer Breeze !

How many seasons hast thou been awake,
 Freshening the seas,

Or sweeping lightly o'er the mountain lake !
 How many noble foreheads hast thou fanned,
 Fevered with thought, or wearied with command,
 The mighty giants of our common race !
 How hast thou wooed with a most sweet embrace,
 Bright-haired and laughing maidens in their mirth !

How, springing lightly from the genial earth,
 Have roses, bending 'neath thy loving breath
 Exhaled new fragrance! How does even Death
 Seem to the soul less sad when thou art by,
 Dispersing every cloudlet from the sky!
 For we are touched by outward influence,
 And deeply stirred by that which round us moves:
 The things of sense
 Awake the soul to purer, holier loves.

O Summer Breeze! a moment ere we part—
 Thou hast brought back old life-blood to my heart;
 The same which flowed when Love and I together,
 Listened to thy soft voice in sunny weather.
 And SHE was with me then, whose glowing eyes
 Shone with the light of life's fresh sympathies.
 O, happy hours! O, plenitude of bliss!
 O, glorious dream-land! Comes there not again,
 Borne on thy wings, O Breeze, the olden strain

Which wont to cheer me on a day like this?—
 When not a fleecy cloud was in the sky,
 When not a sound save the sweet rural sound
 Of trees, and running brooks, and singing birds,
 Disturbed the music of her gentle words—
 Music, whose only echo was a sigh.
 Beneath an old tree on the mossy ground,
 Beneath the greenness of a scented lime,
 In happy converse we beguiled the time,
 Or conned old poets through the live-long day—
 Spenser, or Shakespeare, or the earlier lay
 Of ancient Chaucer: thus the moments flew,
 Light as the winged seed of the wayside flowers
 Which crowd our pathway through the summer hours.

O, happy hours!—and must I bid adieu
 To the fond memories of that early morn,
 When e'en the roses bloomed without a thorn?
 No; while life's retrospect hath power to move

O Breeze ! O Summer Breeze ! I 'll reckon still
The treasures of the past ; and as a mother
Bends o'er her sleeping one with tears of love,
And thinks the world contains not such another,
So I will dwell on them, till joy shall fill
My cup twice o'er, with what I had and have :
Blessed thus with both, what further can I crave ?

THE OLYMPIC GAMES.

SHOUT, shout aloud through Hellas!

For war and strife are o'er;

Let Grecians join with heart and hand

To try their skill once more!

Hurrah! for the wild olive wreath,

Hurrah! for the ancient Fane,

For him who earns a glorious meed

Upon the Elean plain.

From lofty Thessaly they come,

Where Achilles' race held sway;

From where proud Corinth stretches forth

Her broad and ample bay;

From Thebes, which rose beneath the touch
Of Amphion's magic lyre ;
With Theseus' lineage, who claim
Ægeus for their sire.

The peasant and the king are met,
The warrior and the peer—
All eager, ere life's sun goes down,
To gain their glory here.
Fame is the noble guerdon
Of him who wears the crown ;
Shout ! for th' immortal voice of song
Shall echo his renown.

Joy to Olympia's sacred land,
Where the olive branch extends !
Joy to the groves of Alpheus,
Where foemen meet as friends !

We ask no bloody trophies,
 No death, to grace the day;
 But he whose skill the gods have blest
 Shall bear the prize away.

How gladly, when the games are o'er,
 We'll join the gazing throng;
 And view our Phidias' matchless art,
 And hear great Pindar's song!
 How gladly listen to the strains
 Caught from Elysian bowers;
 Notes of immortal melody
 For finer ears than ours!

Then shout aloud through Hellas,
 That war and strife are o'er;
 That Grecians join with heart and hand,
 To try their skill once more.

Hurrah! for the wild olive wreath,
Hurrah! for the ancient Fane,
For him who earns a glorious meed
Upon the Elean plain.

TO THE OLD YEAR.

Old year, thy days are nearly over,
And I am sad as any lover,
To think that thou and I must sever—
To think that now we part for ever.
Though thou art old, a mournful grace
Lovingly lingers on thy face;
And if the light upon thy brow
In summer hours, has faded now,
Yet some there are, and I am one,
Who love thee though thy course be run;
And freshly still in bliss or pain,
Live all thy moments o'er again.

Old year, thou bearest in thy train
 Grave resolutions formed in vain;
 And hopes and aspirations high,
 Made at thy birth, with thee must die.
 But let that pass—the seeds of hope
 Fell thickly at thy horoscope:
 Thou hast not seen the world for nought,
 Each year finds truths the past had sought,
 And earth will show again in time
 The freshness of its early prime.

Old year, awhile look back with me
 Upon thy distant ancestry;
 With pipe, and clarionet, and drum,
 Arrayed in martial pomp they come
 Covered with blood, yet on their way
 Welcomed by many a poet's lay—
 Poets, to whom the gift was given
 Of filling earth with strains of Heaven.

So loud the music, and so high
 They raised their noisy minstrelsy,
 None heard the lonely widow's wail,
 None marked how woman's cheek turned pale—
 But man to brother-man became
 Like beast of prey, or bird of game.
 Within the old cathedral pile
 A different strain is heard the while,
 Of 'Peace on earth, good-will to men!'
 The anthem ceases,—Hark! again,
 While from the choir ascends on high
 Praise for a bloody victory!
 Praise hateful to the throne above—
 To Him whose very name is Love.

Now all is changed, for lord and knight
 No longer care to grace the fight;
 They seek a nobler field of strife—
 To nourish, not to injure life.

One I would name, of courage far
 ' Bove martial heroes famed in war,
 Who, when disease with fearful power,
 Advanced with hasty steps each hour,
 Did all that spirit strong and true—
 Did all that mortal man could do.
 Nor pass I those in lowlier life
 Who shrunk not from the awful strife,
 Heroic souls! they feared no ill,
 Obedient to the Higher Will;
 Their strength, their life, their all, was given
 To point their brother-men to Heaven.

Old year, farewell! though death and pain
 Have crossed thy path, yet still a strain
 Of holy gratitude shall rise
 For all the hallowed sympathies—
 The love, the self-denial, the faith,
 Which softened pain, and conquered death.

And 't is my creed, that from the past
A blessing will arise at last—
That evil bringeth good, though stern
The discipline by which we learn.

Old year, farewell! with lasting glory
Thy name shall live in future story;
Hope shall be with thee to the end,
And Peace on thy last hours descend;
Peace, dove-winged Peace, shall yet alight,
And close thine eyes—Good night! good night!

December, 1849.

THE BUTTERFLY.

(From the German.)

My mind is like a weather-vane,
From east to west it ranges,
Now here, now there, devoid of pain,
Each wind its fancy changes :
I know not if *my* heart alone,
Such fickleness confesses ;
Where'er I go, I frankly own
I seek for love's caresses.

To-day, I take to flaxen hair,
To-morrow, brown enraptures ;

And then, without a thought of care,

A raven lock encaptures :

No beauty holds me long in thrall,

But if a black eye harms me,

I seek a remedy for all,

And find a blue that charms me.

Thus, quickly pass the moments by,

Nor leave a trace of sorrow ;

I sing while craven spirits sigh,—

Too careful of the morrow,—

With dance, and jest, and lightsome glee,

Each hour will have its blisses ;

And every day brings songs to me,

And every evening kisses.

(From the German.)

WHITHER away Bird, whither away?

“To the North, to the North—

For there the sun shines warm to-day,

And there the Spring buds forth.”

O little Bird! with wings so bright,

If chance should lead you in your flight

To the home of her I love,—

Then tell her how by day and night

Of her I dream, in her delight,

And that I constant prove.

And the flowers in the valley,

Greet a thousand times for me!

TO KOSSUTH.

KOSSUTH! when genius shall have fled the earth,
When truth shall fail, when honesty shall die;
When hopes which looked to Heaven from their birth,
Like withered leaves in autumn woods shall lie;
When hymns of praise shall cease beneath the sky,
And God-forsaken, earth shall fall a prey
To bigot's rule, or despot's sovereignty;—
No more a household word, thy name shall then
Be blotted from the memories of men,—

But not before. Oh! is it not this hour,
And shall not Liberty for ever be

While time itself doth last, earth's fairest flower?
 As thy heart beats for *her*, we warm to thee,
 And, free ourselves, would have our brothers free.
 The mighty stream on which *our* fortunes sail,
 Was once a rill,—but pressing towards the sea,
 It spread, and spreading, waters all the earth;
 God grant a kindred lot to kindred worth!

Heaven help thee, Brave One! thou hast need of aid;
 Heaven shelter Hungary from the evil day,
 From stern oppression, from the glittering blade—
 And, far, far more, from virtue's slow decay!
 But, as the eagle, having winged her way
 Through heights of air and over icy peaks,
 Receives more thrillingly the sun's warm ray,—
 So may thy country rise among the free,
 And feel the grateful glow of Liberty!

SUMMER THOUGHTS.

'Tis sweet to live in God's free air,
Undazzled by the city's glare,
 'Midst meadows, streams, and mountains;
To wander through the forest glade,
Or tired at length, to seek the shade,
 By one of nature's fountains.

Nursing bright thoughts beneath the trees,
Or listening to the summer breeze
 Which bloweth fresh upon me;
Whilst joyous hopes within me rise,
Of happier scenes beyond those skies
 Which now are smiling on me.

The little flow'rets by the side
 Of the clear stream, seem half to hide
 Their beauty, half to show it;
 More proud, perchance, if they could dream
 How oft their fragrance forms a theme
 For lover and for poet.

How blithely doth the black-cap sing!
 The joyous lark with eager wing
 Shoots upwards—wild with gladness;
 The wood-pigeon's soft under-tone,
 Recalling joys for ever flown,
 Fills all my soul with sadness—

A sadness sweet, though fraught with pain;
 The days long past return again,
 By all their hopes attended;
 And strains of never-changing truth,
 And low-toned voices heard in youth,
 In one fond union blended.

A face appears to soothe and bless,
A maiden stoops to my caress,
Oh! vision fair, but fleeting;
If fancy such a phantom shows,
How dear the form from whence it rose!
How sweet her angel-greeting!

Ah! were SHE here, whose modest grace
Lends double charms to nature's face,
My bliss would be completer;
But severed far by mounts and streams,
'Tis only in the hour of dreams,
I e'er may hope to meet her.

I'd live a life among the hills,
Come Mary, wilt thou live with me?
We'll have the music of the rills,
Or sky-lark's sweeter melody.
No angry words shall mar our rest,
'Twere hard if two could not agree,
We'll be so happy in our nest,
Come Mary, wilt thou live with me?

I know a dear sequestered nook,
A sheltered spot, a happy place,
Oh! there the very flowers would look
More lovely, gazing on thy face;

I know a cottage far away—

But not too far for Love to flee—

Then Mary, answer, Yea? or Nay?

Sweet Mary, wilt thou live with me?

The Town is not a place for rest,

I'm weary of its garish strife,

And long with Nature to be blest,

And thee, dear Mary, as a wife.

How gladly through life's checkered day,

I'd share its weal and woe with thee!

Then Mary, answer, Yea? or Nay?

Sweet Mary, wilt thou live with me?

TO A CAGED NIGHTINGALE.

ALAS, poor bird! no longer canst thou sit
Upon the bough, and tax thy mother-wit
For some new ditty to thy love, the Rose;—
In vain for thee the evening flowers uncloset—
In vain for thee the blessed calm of night,
The chastened softness of its starry light—
In vain the dirge-like chaunting of the breeze
Through the laced branches of the leafy trees;
For thou art caged! and every joy from thee
Has vanished with thy sad captivity.
And once I, too, was free—without a care
Or scarce a thought—to wander everywhere;

Grief had not weighed upon my mind, for then
I saw the future with a boyish ken,
And all was bright as the wild flowers in spring,
And pleasant as thy voice when thou didst sing
Among the forest boughs. Sweet bird, farewell!
I may not hear thee more; but as a knell
Saddening the spirit of a passer-by,
Or as a strain of gloomiest melody,
Thy few faint notes will linger on mine ear,
And I shall think of thee—a prisoner—
And of myself; and so we two shall be
Fellows in heart, from lack of liberty.

(From the German.)

O WEARY Heart! why grieveest thou?

A few sad hours, and thou shalt be

From pain and sorrow too set free.

Thy spirit now so firmly bound,

Enfranchised then, shall spring on high

And find its homestead in the sky.

O Weary Heart, why grieveest thou?

Why grieveest thou? The Mighty Soul

Round whom each spacious orb revolves

Sees too thy little life, and solves

Each dark enigma of the whole;

He counts the tear-drops as they fall,
He stills the beatings of thy heart,
'Tis He alone can peace impart—
The Mighty One! Why grievest thou?

Despair not, O thou Weary One!
But if thy heart break forth in tears,
Look upwards to those radiant spheres;
See yonder in the distance shine
Ten thousand stars,—then why repine?
How spacious is thy Father's house!
Ah there! ah there! we poor ones may
Rest on His bosom day by day.

Despair not, O thou Weary One!

TO THE
MEMORY OF JAMES MACKNESS, Esq., M.D.

WE mourn and wonder at the gap death makes;
Not by the living can thy place be filled,
But tears are needed only for our sakes,
Thy work was done, and all God meant fulfilled.
We measure not thy life by years, but worth,
For he lives longest who does most on earth.

And thou art living yet, in the fond hearts
Of all whom sickness brought beneath thy care.
Skill may relieve, but Sympathy imparts
Fresh wings to Hope, and even quells Despair;
They who once felt it will forget thee never,
Thy patients for a day, thy friends for ever.

Death gave thee immortality ; and now
 ' Mid the first throbbings of a nobler life,
How dost thou look upon this scene below,
 Its toil and grief, its vanity and strife ?
The labour o'er, how sweet the rest must be !
The battle fought, how grand the victory !

Farewell ! farewell ! the spirits of the just,
 Have called thee, ' Brother.' Happy soul, adieu !
We grieve no more, but with unshaken trust
 Would look beyond this narrow earth-bound view ;
God summoned thee, and now His love hath given
 ' The rest and the activities of Heaven.'

THE GOOD MAN.

Up the hill of life he toiled

Cheerily, cheerily,

Though its dust his garb had soiled;

Still upward cheerily.

Gladdened by an inner light,

Strengthened with an inward might,

He was strong to bear or fight,

Cheerily, cheerily.

And the flowers smiled before him,

Cheerily, cheerily;

Woodland birds sang ditties o'er him,

Cheerily, cheerily;

Mountain streams would foam and play,
Madly wild to pass his way,
They besprinkled him with spray,
Cheerily, cheerily.

Loving eyes shone aye about him,
Cheerily, cheerily;
Though at times the world might doubt him,
Still went he cheerily.

Catching pleasures as they fell,
In him, round him, all was well,
Joy moved o'er him like a spell,
Cheerily, cheerily.

So he proved a soldier fighting,
Cheerily, cheerily;
All his soul to duty plighting,
Cheerily, cheerily;

Till the clouds which barred his way,
One by one had passed away,
And the light of perfect day
Shone o'er him cheerily.

T R U T H.

TRUTH, radiant-eyed and ever pure,
Bends o'er me pointing to the light,
Revealing things which were obscure,
And strengthening with an inward might.

The world has lessened half its weight.
Like one who breathes the mountain air,
I step with heart and foot elate
Raised from a denser atmosphere.

On every side a glory breaks,
Which grows more brilliant as I rise,
Though faint at first like glimmering streaks
Of morn upon the eastern skies.

And now the scene is calm and bright,

A happy region made for rest—

Above the mist, above the night,

The cloud-land of a troubled breast.

And I am free—come storm or shine,

Contented with a quiet lot ;

The light that guides me is divine,

The dazzling glare of earth is not.

TO THE CHRISTIAN.

FEAR not to die, for death is gain,
'Tis ease from toil, release from pain,
It is but going home again.

Fear not to die.

Fear not to die, nor shrink and weep,
But rest as calm as babes in sleep,
The fruit of all thy prayers to reap.

Fear not to die.

Fear not to die, our daily doom
Conducts us gently to the tomb,
And light from heaven dispels the gloom.

Fear not to die.

Fear not to die, swift as a spear,
 Death hastens on the wings of fear;
 To those who tremble it is near.

Fear not to die.

Fear not to die, God never meant
 That Death should prove thy punishment.
 Oh! take it as in mercy sent.

Fear not to die.

Fear not to die. The Saviour's head
 Has slumbered on man's final bed;
 For thee, HE visited the dead.

Fear not to die.

Fear not to die, for thee HE rose
 And overthrew thy stoutest foes,
 Now, death alone can bring repose.

Fear not to die.

But fear to live, and watch and pray
Lest sin should lead thy soul astray,
Thou canst not trust thyself a day,
Then fear to live.

D E A T H .

SHE faded as a star will fade
Before the orb of night;
She drooped as an evening flower will droop
In the full blaze of light.

We sorrowed not,—no burning tears
Fell on her cold, cold face,
For there beamed a light upon her brow,
From the heavenly resting-place.

And even when we closed her eyes,
There seemed an upward gaze,
As though body and soul together heard
The Angels' song of praise.

O Death ! thou mystery sad and strange,
 The weak one feared not thee,—
 For her heart was in the blessed land,
 With the Father's family.

THE GREEK POETS.

LOVING the beautiful with child-like awe,
They found in Nature's outward form, a soul
Which filled all space, and harmonized the whole.
In them, the simple truth of Nature's law
Infused a living energy—the store
From whence they drew, conferred no paltry dole;
They quaffed rich draughts from an o'erflowing bowl,
The ancient woods, the rock-resounding shore,
The clear blue heavens, and the stars of night,
Flashing upon their inward finer sense,
And pregnant with divine intelligence,
Seemed all encircled with celestial light.
So, raised and quickened by a thought intense,
Their souls were wafted to the Infinite!

LANDMARKS.

LANDMARKS there are, on which we gaze with pride,
 Hallowed by noble deeds, heroic worth,
 Or kindest sympathies! On sacred earth
 The bones of Patriots fell, but far and wide
 Their fame has spread, and swells the flowing tide
 Of freedom; so from time's earliest hour,
 Virtues have sprung to crush a despot's power.
 Truth, firm as earth's foundations shall abide,
 And startled by her voice, the nations wake,
 Roused from their slumbers. Harken to the roar,
 Like wild waves rolling on a rocky shore!
 Within their massive walls the tyrants quake:
 We know they, that though won through heaps of
 slain,
 Men's franchised hearts will have their rights again.

SPRING.

BLESSINGS be with the Spring, the joyous Spring!

Like a glad mother on her first-born gazing,

Heaven looks to earth, and earth to heaven is raising

Bright smiles and happy sounds; the thrushes sing

In the green fields; the lark with spirit-wing

O'ershoots the clouds; the plovers on the moors,

The pensive blackbirds by the cottage doors,

Alike, right loyally their tribute bring;

While in the quiet face of each sweet flower,

In no uncertain lines, we mark the joy

Which reigns, without abatement or alloy,

Through the fair earth, at this its wakening hour;

And streams and waterfalls unite their voice

To the full strain, and say, "Rejoice, rejoice!"

TO THE SWAN.

BIRD of the waters, on the smooth lake's breast
How grandly dost thou sail!—serene and free,
And noble in thy queenly dignity;
Now gliding rapidly, as if in quest
Of some new beauty; now, with lifted crest
And head erect, thou sittest silently,
Like a calmed vessel on a sleeping sea.
The willows wave around, and water-flowers
Ope' their bright eyes to catch thy glance, then close,
As bashful as a tender new-blown rose
Woo'd by a nightingale in summer bowers—
That singer of love-songs in moonlight hours!
And now, O Swan! thou bendest o'er the lake,
Which seems to grow more clear for thy sweet sake.

(To the same.)

WHY do the poets say, that thou dost sing
A song of deepest joy when death is nigh?
Why? but to show us how we too should die.
The lark that soareth with unwearied wing,
Deems it no labour in its life's young spring,
To flood the broad bright space with ecstasy:
So all seems light to *us* when health runs high.
But when the shadows of life's evening fling
Their gloom around us, and the mists of night
Shroud us in darkness—then, O Bird! with thee
'Twere hard, but sweet, to spend our feeble might
In one glad strain of grateful minstrelsy;
And singing thus to enter into light,
From the last tempest of life's troubled sea.

THE BATTLE OF LIFE.

LIFE is a struggle. Some for wealth or fame
 Exert their energies; intently wrought
 They seek till they obtain the boon they sought;
 And some to leave the enchantment of a name,
 Madly pursue the spirit-stirring game
 Of shaking nations; by the sword or pen,
 Heedless of truth, they rouse their fellow-men
 To demon fury, or to deeds of shame.

The wise man ventures on a nobler strife,
 And seeks a nobler crown; he looks within,
 And strives by heavenly aid to conquer sin,
 Though clouds oppress him, and though storms are
 rife,—

Their bliss is passed, when *his* full joys begin,
 The endless pleasures of an endless life.

TO A FRIEND.

CLOUDS are not substance, wherefore dost thou fear
When gloom oppresseth thee? A pure bright light
Gleams out beyond, to those who walk aright,—
A light which in the darkness shines more clear,
Shedding its rays to comfort and to cheer
The hearts that trust it. Faith and Hope will spring
From deepest sorrow, with unfettered wing,
Through fog and mist, into a nobler sphere.
Be patient then, and resolute to brave
Life's cares or joys; for joy is hard to bear,
And he who seeks a pleasure, finds a snare;
Tossed to and fro on life's tempestuous wave,
Until he rest, from all commotion free,
In the calm haven of Eternity.

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